



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/797,524	03/10/2004	Donald A. Huenefeld	1099	4530

7590 02/22/2005

Donald J. Ersler  
725 Garvens Avenue  
Brookfield, WI 53005

EXAMINER

WINNER, TONY H

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3611

DATE MAILED: 02/22/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/797,524

Applicant(s)

HUENEFELD, DONALD A.

Examiner

Tony H. Winner

Art Unit

3611

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 December 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6,8-12 and 14-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6,8-12 and 14-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***Acknowledgment***

1. Receipt of the amendment filed 12/8/04 has been acknowledged and entered. Claims 7, 13, and 18 have been canceled. The office is withdrawing all previous rejections in view of the amendment.

***Claim Objections***

2. Applicant is advised that should:
  - a. claims 1 and 2 be found allowable, claim 8 will be objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof,
  - b. claims 8 and 10 be found allowable, claim 14 will be objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof.

When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-4, 6, 8-10, 12, 14, 15, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dahl (US. patent 6,199,892 B1) in view of McMillan (U.S. Pat. 6,835,021 B1).

Dahl discloses a method of protecting a female cavity of a female hitch receiver, comprising the steps of:

- a. providing a male body that is sized to be received by an inside perimeter of the female cavity;
- b. inserting said male body into said the female cavity when the female hitch receiver is not in use,
- c. providing a means for withdrawing said male body from said female cavity,
- d. providing an end cap for said means for withdrawing said male body,
- e. forming a retention hole through said male body, inserting a fastener through said retention hole and a retention pin hole in the female hitch receiver.

Dahl lacks the teaching of the use of lubrication, oil, or grease between two components.

McMillan teaches a trailer accessory stabilizing device that employs a method of lubrication, oil, or grease (col 4 lines 58-62) two mating components so as to provide unhindered slidable movement between two mating members.

Based on the teaching of McMillan, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of protecting

hitch receiver assembly of Dahl to include the method of lubricating two mating members of McMillan so as to provide a method of unhindered slidable movement between two mating members.

With regard to claims 2-4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 15, and 17 Dahl as modified by McMillan discloses all of the method claimed limitations.

4. Claims 5, 11, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dahl in view of McMillan.

Dahl as modified by McMillan discloses all of the method claimed limitations except for the type of material uses for the fastener. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide a plastic tube for the fastener, so as to provide a means to reduce cost, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material of the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. In re Leshin, 125 USPQ 416.

### ***Response to Arguments***

5. Applicant's argument filed 12/8/04 has been fully considered but they are moot in view of new art rejection.

### ***Conclusion***

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communication from the examiner should be directed to Anthony H. Winner whose telephone number is (703)

306-5957. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lesley Morris, can be reached at (703) 308-0629. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

7. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information-Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll free).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.



**TONY WINNER**  
**PATENT EXAMINER**

February 17, 2005